



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Idaho State Department of Education  
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[www.sde.idaho.gov](http://www.sde.idaho.gov)

Media contact:  
Melissa McGrath  
(208) 332-6818  
[mrmcgrath@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:mrmcgrath@sde.idaho.gov)

# SUPERINTENDENT LUNA PROPOSES MORE STEM OPPORTUNITIES FOR IDAHO STUDENTS

POCATELLO – Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna partnered with the Idaho Technology Council and leaders of technology companies in Idaho to propose a way to give Idaho students more opportunities to take STEM-related courses while in high school.

The proposed changes are part of Superintendent Luna's efforts to ensure every Idaho student not only graduates from high school but goes on to postsecondary education prepared for the world that awaits them.

Superintendent Luna recommended the proposed change in administrative rule at the Idaho State Board of Education's meeting in Pocatello on Thursday.

"With this flexibility, students can gain valuable exposure to high-demand fields in science, technology, engineering and mathematics," Superintendent Luna said. "Often, students have interest in STEM courses, but are not willing to give up electives to take these classes. By expanding our math and science requirements, we will open up a world of high-tech opportunities to every high school student."

Under the proposed rule change, high school students would have the option to take dual credit engineering, dual credit computer science, or Advanced Placement (AP) computer science and count it as a mathematics or science credit.

Currently, students can take these courses but only for elective credit, which does not count toward the state's graduation requirement of three years of mathematics and three years of science.

The Idaho State Board of Education granted initial approval of this proposed rule, allowing it to go out for public comment. It will return to the Board in November for final consideration. If approved, the proposal will go before the Idaho Legislature in January for final approval. It must be approved by at least one body in the Legislature.

The Idaho State Department of Education worked closely with several technology businesses, higher education, and the Idaho Technology Council to develop this change in rule and expand what is considered a mathematics and science credit.

"The Idaho Technology Council is proud to work with the Idaho State Department of Education and leaders in Idaho's technology industry to craft this change in state policy, which will give every Idaho student the opportunity to take STEM-related courses while in high school. Careers in these fields are important today and will only become more imperative in the future. By taking these courses in high school, students can gain the skills they need to graduate and pursue their future as engineers, computer programmers, software developers, or other jobs that have become critical in the world we live in today," said Jay Larsen, President and Founder of the Idaho Technology Council.

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STEM-related fields, including computer programming and engineering, are listed among the Idaho Department of Labor's 'hot jobs' over the next decade. Jobs in these fields are expected to increase up to 30 percent. For example, across the country over the next seven years, companies are expected to need about 30,000 software developers.

If approved, this rule change will go into effect in the 2014-2015 school year.

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